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IDO AND ENGLISH.

As a believer in the feasibility, practicability and necessity of an international language, and, after investigating about sixty such projects, finding Ido by far the best and most perfect, I was greatly pleased to see in *The Monist* of January, 1916, a short grammar of this language. Incidentally allow me to mention that there are some errors in the exposition in *The Monist*, the most important of which is on page 149, line 3, where instead of "*qua*, who (masculine), *qui*, who (feminine), *quo*, what (neuter)," it ought to be: "*qua*, who or which (singular), *qui*, who or which (plural), *quo*, what."

But my object in writing to you is principally to argue against the following article in *The Monist*: "English as a Universal Language," by Albon P. Man, Jr. He thinks that a simplification of English spelling would make the English language fit to become "the universal language." This is not a new proposition, but the fact that English is now the most widely diffused language does not prove that it is fit to become the "universal," or as I prefer calling it, the "international" language, for the promoters of this idea do not intend that it should supplant the other national languages, but that it should be for all the "second" language, next to their mother tongue.

It is universally acknowledged that English, though comparatively easy in its grammar, compared to most other natural languages, is extremely difficult, not only in its orthography, but in its pronunciation and so-called accent. A foreigner may be able to speak English correctly, but almost at the first word one will be able to notice that he is a foreigner. Besides, in order to speak English correctly a foreigner needs long and arduous study, unless he happens to live in an English-speaking country.

Now if English (or any other national language) should be selected as the "second" language for all, those whose "first" (or mother-) language it is, would have an immense advantage, an advantage which other nations would hardly be willing to concede to it. And even then those to the manner born would be able to speak it more fluently, with less mental exertion and without a foreign accent.

But leaving this point aside, does any one suppose that after this war the most important civilized nations will accept English

(or any other national language) as an international medium? And without such acceptance no language, natural or artificial, can become that medium.

A simplification of English spelling would not make English appreciably easier for foreigners; it would make it easier for English and American children who know the language already, but not for others. Besides, even the reformed spelling gives absolutely no clue how a word should be pronounced, unless one knows the word already. To take one or two examples from Mr. Man's own letter: Why should "been" and "in" be pronounced with a short *i* and spelt differently? Who can guess that in "sho" and "to," though written with the same vowel, that vowel is pronounced differently, etc., etc.

All this shows that only a "neutral" language, which also in its grammar, spelling and word-construction is easy, can ever hope to be accepted as "the international language."

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